



Our team has been busy on the [River Darent](#) near Shoreham, Kent, delivering a new phase of habitat improvements to help this precious chalk stream thrive. Working with volunteers from [Darent Valley Trout Fishers](#), we've installed a series of nature-inspired features that create the conditions wild brown trout and other fish species need to recover and flourish.

Working with nature to reshape a healthy river

Chalk streams like the Darent depend on clean gravels, varied flows and plenty of in-stream structure to support spawning fish and young wildlife. Over time, sections of the channel can become over-widened or simplified, leaving fewer places for trout to shelter, feed or reproduce.



Brown trout © South East Rivers Trust

To bring natural processes back into play, our team installed:

- **Large woody material**, mimicking what would naturally fall into the river after a storm.
- **Hinged living trees**, carefully lowered to create cover and complexity while keeping roots anchored.
- **Whole trees placed in the channel**, providing instant habitat and encouraging the river to move and reshape itself.

These natural materials narrow the channel in places, protect the banks and create the varied flow patterns that a healthy chalk stream needs. By deflecting water, they introduce faster and slower currents, helping the river scour gravels in some areas and deposit them in others. This

reshaping leads to **clean, loose gravels essential for trout spawning**, alongside new **pools, riffles and refuge areas** for young fish and other wildlife.



The River Darent at Shoreham, Kent © South East Rivers Trust

Creating meanders and space for wildlife

One of the standout features is a large **brash and woody berm**, designed to guide the river into a gentle meander. Over time, this structure will support marginal plants, provide valuable cover for wildlife and encourage the river to re-establish a more natural flow path.

Powered by volunteers and partnership

These improvements were made possible thanks to the brilliant volunteers from **Darent Valley Trout Fishers**, whose hard work and expertise helped bring the project to life.

The project is funded by the [Environment Agency](#) and forms part of our ongoing programme to restore natural river processes along the River Darent — helping this chalk stream become more resilient for the future.